

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM USMISSION NATO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1359
INFO AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 USNATO 0440

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, NATO, PINT, PL
SUBJECT: NATO STUDY OF THE SITUATION IN POLAND

REF: (A) USNATO 0374, (B) STATE 008749

1. INTERNATIONAL STAFF (IS) HAS CIRCULATED FOLLOWING
DRAFT PAPER ON THE SITUATION IN POLAND WHICH WILL BE
DISCUSSED AT FEBRUARY 1 POLADS MEETING. IS DRAFT IS BASED
ON NATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS, INCLUDING US ASSESSMENT TRANS-
MITTED REF B. WE FIND THAT DRAFT IS BALANCED AND
WELL-WRITTEN, BUT WOULD APPRECIATE ANY SPECIFIC POINTS WHICH
DEPARTMENT WOULD WISH US TO RAISE AT FEBRUARY 1 MEETING.

2. ACTION REQUEST: GUIDANCE, IF POSSIBLE, IN TIME FOR
FEBRUARY 1 POLADS.

3. BEGIN TEXT:

LESS THAN SIX MONTHS AFTER THE RIOTS IN THE BALTIC
PORTS, THE POLISH GOVERNMENT WAS ONCE AGAIN OBLIGED LAST JUNE
TO GIVE IN TO THE DETERMINED OPPOSITION OF THE WORKERS AND
RESCIND THE RISES IT HAD ANNOUNCED IN FOOD PRICES. TAKEN ABACK
BY THE UNEXPECTEDNESS AND VIOLENCE OF THESE REACTIONS, IT
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BECAME AWARE OF ITS WEAKNESS AND OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH IT WAS
ISOLATED. THE INCREASED IDEOLOGICAL OBDURACY WHICH CAME IN THE
WAKE OF THE HELSINKI CONFERENCE HAD ALREADY LOST IT THE SUPPORT
OF THE STUDENTS AND INTELLECTUALS. THE INTELLIGENTSIA AND THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH STRONGLY DENOUNCED THE RECOGNITION IN THE
CONSTITUTION OF THE LEADING ROLE OF THE UNITED WORKERS' PARTY
AND THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOVIET UNION. THE
GOVERNMENT NOW HAS TO CONTEND WITH OPPOSITION FORCES WHICH
COMMAND A BIG AUDIENCE AMONG ALL SOCIAL CATEGORIES. MOREOVER,
THE CREATION OF THE "WORKERS' DEFENCE COMMITTEE", WHICH HAS THE

UNOBTRUSIVE SUPPORT OF THE HIERARCHY, MAY BE THE FIRST SIGN OF A HOLY ALLIANCE AMONG THE DIFFERENT OPPOSITION GROUPS WHICH UNTIL NOW HAVE REMAINED DIVIDED.

2. IN VIEW OF THE STRENGTH OF PUBLIC OPPOSITION, WHICH SHOWED JUST HOW INCAPABLE THE PARTY AND THE TRADE UNIONS WERE OF MAKING GOVERNMENT DECISIONS STICK, THE AUTHORITIES ADOPTED A PRAGMATIC APPROACH BY IMMEDIATELY POSTPONING THE PRICE RISES "FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION" AND BY ORGANIZING NATION-WIDE DEMONSTRATIONS DESIGNED TO RESTORE PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN THE LEADERSHIP. BUT THIS LEFT THE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS WHICH THE NEW PRICE STRUCTURE WAS SUPPOSED TO REMEDY UNSETTLED AND LIKELY TO GET WORSE AS TIME WENT ON. BECUASE NO REFORMS WERE POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF ALL VITAL ELEMENTS OF NATIONAL LIFE, THE GOVERNMENT HAD VERY LITTLE ROOM FOR MANOEUVRE.

3. GIEREK'S VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION AT THE HEAD OF A PARTY AND GOVERNMENT DELEGATION SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN A SUCCESS; THE FIRST SECRETARY OBTAINED THE PERSONAL SUPPORT OF BREZHNEV, BOTH FOR HIMSELF AND FOR HIS CONSUMER-ORIENTED POLICY, AS WELL AS A PROMISE OF SUBSTANTIAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. IT SEEMS THAT THE RUSSIANS HAVE AGREED TO GRANT POLAD A LOW-INTEREST LOAN OF \$1.3 MILLIARD AND TO SUPPLY FOODSTUFFS, RAW MATERIALS, OIL IN EXCESS OF THE PROGRAMMED QUANTITIES AND CONSUMER GOODS. THEY HAVE EVEN IMPLICITLY RECOGNISED THE "PLURALISTIC" NATURE OF THE POLISH SYSTEM BY AGREEING TO RECEIVE A DELEGATION WHICH COMPRISED CONFIDENTIAL

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REPRESENTATIVES OF THE TWO OTHER PARTIES AND AN APOLTICAL INTELLECTUAL, AS WELL AS THE LEADERS OF THE UNITED WORKERS' PARTY. GIEREK, FOR HIS PART, PAID A CERTAIN POLITICAL PRICE BY AGREEING TO INCLUDE IN THE JOINT DECLARATION PUBLISHED AT THE CLOSE OF THE VISIT A REFERENCE TO "THE INTERNATIONALIST DUTY OF SOCIALIST COUNTRIES" TO DEFEND SOCIALIST ACHIEVEMENTS. BUT THE INITIAL IMPRESSION THAT THERE HAD BEEN SOME HAGGLING AND THAT IN RETURN FOR AID THE POLES HAD AGREED TO A CLOSER ALIGNMENT ON MOSCOW IN FOREIGN POLICY AND TO INCREASED ECONOMIC INTEGRATION IN COMECON HAS NOT BEEN BORNE OUT BY EVENTS. IT NOW APPEARS THAT MOSCOW'S FIRST CONCERN IS TO BOLSTER A WEAKENED REGIME AND AVOID THE RECURRENCE OF DISORDERS RATHER THAN TO STRENGTHEN ITS HOLD ON A POLITICALLY UNSTABLE AND ECONOMICALLY VULNERABLE ALLY. WHILE THE COMECON SHARE OF POLISH FOREIGN TRADE IS EXPECTED TO RISE IN THE COMING YEARS, THE TREND WILL BE DICTATED ABOVE ALL BY THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC REQUIREMENTS AND THE SAME IS TRUE OF THE EXPECTED DROP IN POLISH IMPORTS FROM THE WEST.

4. EMBOLDENED BY THE POLITICAL SUPPORT AND ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE HE HAD OBTAINED FROM THE SOVIET UNION, GIEREK ATTEMPTED EARLY IN DECEMBER TO STRENGTHEN HIS OWN AND HIS PARTY'S POSITION SO AS TO AVOID A DIRECT CONFRONTATION WITH THE PUBLIC. AT THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE PLENARY MEETING HE OUTLINED A NEW ECONOMIC POLICY DESIGNED TO MEET CONSUMER REQUIREMENTS

AND WHICH IN PRACTICE MEANS A DOWNWARD REVISION OF THE CURRENT FIVE-YEAR PLANNING TARGETS; THERE WAS ALSO SOME RESHUFFLING OF PARTY AND GOVERNMENT MACHINERY.

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5. ON THE DOMESTIC FRONT, THE REGIME MAY REASONABLY EXPECT SOME SUCCESS. GIEREK AND JAROSZEWICZ HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY FRANK ABOUT THE DIFFICULTIES FACING THE COUNTRY AND HAVE SOUGHT TO ALLAY PUBLIC FEARS BY UNDERTAKING NOT TO RAISE FOOD PRICES FOR AT LEAST ONE YEAR AND BE ANNOUNCING A SERIES OF IDEOLOGICALLY UNORTHODOX REFORMS DESIGNED TO INCREASE THE SUPPLY OF CONSUMER GOODS. THESE MEASURES INCLUDE A REDUCTION IN THE PERCENTAGE OF GNP INVESTED (FROM 35 PERCENT IN 1975 TO 27.4 PERCENT IN 1977, DECREASING OVER THE FOLLOWING YEARS), AND INCREASE IN INVESTMENTS IN THE BUILDING AND FOOD INDUSTRIES (43 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL), BIGGER SCOPE FOR PRIVATE ENTERPRISE IN THE SERVICE AND AGRICULTURAL SECTORS AND A REDUCTION OF POLAND'S EXTERNAL DEBT BURDEN BY KEEPING THE GROWTH RATE OF IMPORTS AT 26 PERCENT THROUGHOUT THE FIVE-YEAR PERIOD, AS AGAINST 200 PERCENT DURING THE FIVE PRECEDING YEARS, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME ATTEMPTING TO INCREASE EXPORTS BY 75 PERCENT IN THE HOPE OF ACHIEVING A SURPLUS TRADE BALANCE IN 1980.

6. THE CHANGES IN THE LEADERSHIP DECIDED AT THE LAST PLENUM REFLECT A DESIRE FOR CONTINUITY IN THE REGIME'S BASIC ORIENTATION AND RE-ADJUSTMENT OF THE BALANCE BETWEEN THE VARIOUS TENDENCIES CO-EXISTING AMONG THE PARTY HEADS.

ONCE AGAIN GIEREK SUCCEEDED IN ACTING AS THE
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ESSENTIAL KINGPIN OF ANY POLITICAL COMBINATION. ALTHOUGH SLIGHTLY POWER-WORN, HE STILL SEEMS TO BE THE ONLY POLITICAL ABLE TO PREVENT THE EXISTING TENSIONS FROM DEGENERATING TO A POINT WHERE THEY WOULD LEAD TO A SPLIT BETWEEN THE REGIME AND THE COUNTRY. HE APPEARS ABOVE ALL AS PARTY ARBITRATOR AND AS THE GUARANTOR OF

THE COUNTRY'S BASIC POLICY ORIENTATION, ONE OF THE MAIN ELEMENTS OF WHICH IS THE MAINTENANCE OF CLOSE RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION.

JAROSZEWICZ HAS NEVER BEEN POPULAR IN THE COUNTRY AND HIS IMAGE SUFFERED MOST FROM THE GAFFE LAST JUNE. THE FACT THAT HE HAS BEEN KEPT ON MAY BE EXPLAINED BY GIEREK'S RELUCTANCE TO END AT A DIFFICULT TIME AN ASSOCIATION TO WHICH HE IS PERSONALLY ATTACHED, OR IT MAY BE BECAUSE HE WAS UNABLE TO GET RID OF A MAN WHO HAS THE SUPPORT OF MOSCOW. THE GROUP OF TECHNOCRATS GIEREK BROUGHT WITH HIM FROM SILESIA SEEM TO HAVE LOST GROUND. THE POLITICAL RISE OF OLSZOWSKI HAS KEPT PACE WITH THE DIFFICULTIES ASSAILING JAROSZEWICZ AND THE DECLINE OF THE TECHNOCRATS: OLSZOWSKI HAS LEFT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, AND NOW OCCUPIES POSTS BOTH IN THE POLITBURO AND IN THE PARTY SECRETARIAT, HIS FUNCTION APPARENTLY BEING TO ENSURE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CO-ORDINATION, AND ACCORDINGLY TO SUPERVISE AND KEEP A CRITICAL EYE ON GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES. GIEREK SEEMS TO HAVE TRIED TO STRENGTHEN PARTY CONTROL OVER THE ECONOMIC MINISTRIES AND TO UNDERMINE THE POSITION OF THE HARDLINERS.

7. ALTHOUGH THE REGIME IS OFFICIALLY SHOWING A TOLERANT ATTITUDE TO THE CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED BY THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, THE ORGANIZERS OF THE WORKERS' DEFENCE COMMITTEE HAVE BEEN SUBJECTED TO HARASSMENT SINCE DECEMBER AND A SMEAR CAMPAIGN AGAINST THEM IS DEVELOPING IN THE PRESS. HOWEVER, THE AUTHORITIES ARE STILL REVIEWING AND SUSPENDING THE SENTENCES PRONOUNCED AFTER LAST JUNE'S WORKER DEMONSTRATIONS, ALTHOUGH THIS SEEMS TO HAVE DONE LITTLE TO CALM PUBLIC OPINION, SINCE A NUMBER OF LEADING FIGURES, AMONG THEM CARDINAL WYSZYNSKI, ARE MAKING A POINT OF DENOUNCING ALLEGED POLICY BRUTALITY AT THE TIME OF THE RIOTS.

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8. GIEREK IS BANKING ON RESTORING THE CONFIDENCE OF A PEOPLE THAT IS KEYED UP AND DISCONTENTED. HE IS SEEKING TO DEMONSTRATE THE GOODWILL OF THE LEADERSHIP BY MAKING CONCESSIONS WHILE AT THE SAME TIME WARNING THE OPPOSITION FORCES TO REFRAIN FROM EXCESSIVE DEMANDS. THE RECENTLY-ANNOUNCED ECONOMIC MEASURES SHOW THAT GIEREK IS FIRMLY SET ON A POLICY OF CONSUMER DEFENCE; THIS WAS STARTED IN 1971, BUT IS NOW BEING PURSUED AS PART OF A MORE REALISTIC INDUSTRIALISATION PROGRAMME AND WITH MORE SCOPE ALLOWED FOR PRIVATE ENTERPRISE. THE REGIME HOPES THAT THIS NEW GROWTH STRATEGY WILL BRING THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL STRESSES WITHIN MANAGEABLE LIMITS IN A YEAR OR TWO, PROVIDED THAT IT IS HELPED ON BY INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY, BETTER HARVESTS AND AN ECONOMIC PICK-UP IN THE WEST. ALTHOUGH THE SITUATION ON THE DOMESTIC FRONT CONTINUES TO GIVE CAUSE FOR CONCERN, THE RECENT INITIATIVES TAKEN BY GIEREK AND HIS INCREASED AUTHORITY SHOULD GIVE THE REGIME A BETTER CHANCE OF OVERCOMING THE CRISIS.

9. HOWEVER GLOOMY THE PUBLIC STATE OF MIND MAY BE, AN OPEN REVOLT WHICH WOULD JEOPARDISE THE STANDARD OF LIVING IS HARDLY

LIKELY TO OCCUR. IN PARTICULAR, ALTHOUGH THE CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED BY THE CATHOLIC CHURCH HAS BEEN STEPPED UP DURING THE LAST FEW MONTHS, THERE IS NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE CHURCH WILL WANT TO DO ANYTHING WHICH MIGHT ENCOURAGE THE RUSSIANS TO INTERVENE- A CONCERN IT SHARES WITH THE GOVERNMENT. FURTHERMORE, MR. GIEREK CAN COUNT ON THE DEPP-ROOTED NATIONAL SENTIMENTS OF HIS COMPATRIOTS WHO, IN SPITE OF THEIR UNWILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT A REGIME IMPOSED BY MOSCOW, WILL DO NOTHING TO JEOPARDISE THE OVERRIDING NATIONAL INTEREST. HE WILL DO HIS UTMOST TO SUPPRESS ANY DISORDERS OR RIOTS WITHOUT USING FORCE, UNLESS THEIR SCALE IS SUCH AS TO THREATEN THE REGIME ITSELF. AS TO THE POSSIBILITY OF A SOVIET MILITARY INTERVENTION, THIS WOULD BE CONCEIVABLY ONLY IF THE POLISH FORCES WERE UNABLE TO RESTORE ORDER THEMSELVES. END TEXT. STRAUSSZ-HUPE

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